

Chinese businesses hoping to expand in the U.S. and bring jobs face uncertainty and suspicion

By DIDI TANG

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)— It was billed as the "biggest ever economic development project" in north Michigan when Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2022 welcomed a Chinese lithium-ion battery company's plan to build a \$2.36 billion factory and bring a couple thousand jobs to Big Rapids. But now the project by Gotion High-Tech is in the crosshairs of some U.S. lawmakers and local residents.

Leading the charge is Republican Rep. John Moolenaar of Michigan, chairman of the House Select Committee on China, who accuses the Chinese company of having ties to forced labor and says he fears it could spy for Beijing and work to extend China's influence in the U.S. heartland. Gotion rejects the accusations. "I want to see this area have more jobs and investments, but we must not welcome companies that are controlled by people who see us as the enemy and we should not allow them to build here," Moolenaar said at a recent roundtable discussion in Michigan.



U.S. and Chinese flags are set up at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, on July 8, 2023.

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Chinese businesses hoping to expand in the U.S. and bring jobs face uncertainty and suspicion

Continued from Front

Lured by the large U.S. market, Chinese businesses are coming to the United States with money, jobs and technology, only to find rising suspicion at a time of an intensifying U.S.-China rivalry that has spread into the business world.

U.S. wariness of China, coupled with Beijing's desire to protect its technological competitiveness, threatens to rupture ties between the world's two largest economies. That could hurt businesses, workers and consumers, which some warn could undermine the economic foundation that has helped stabilize relations.

"This is a lose-lose scenario for the two countries," Zhiqun Zhu, professor of political science and international relations at Bucknell University, said in an email. "The main reason is U.S.-China rivalry, and the U.S. government prioritizes 'national security' over economic interests in dealing with China."

Lizhi Liu, an assistant professor of business at Georgetown University, said the trend, along with the decline of U.S. investments in China, could hurt China-U.S. relations.

"Strong investment ties between the two nations are crucial not only for economic reasons but also for security, as intertwined economic interests reduce the likelihood of major conflicts or even war," she said.

But U.S. lawmakers believe the stakes are high. Sen. Marco Rubio said at a July hearing that China is not only a military and diplomatic adversary for the U.S. but also a "technological, industrial and commercial" opponent. "The technological and industrial high ground has always been a precursor of global power," said Rubio, a Republican from Florida. He argued that U.S. foreign policy should take into account the country's commercial, trade and technological interests.

The bipartisan House Select Committee on China has warned that widespread adoption in the U.S. of tech-



Gov. Gretchen Whitmer speaks during a news conference in Lansing, Mich., Jan. 25, 2022.

Associated Press

nologies developed by China could threaten long-term U.S. technological competitiveness.

U.S. public sentiment against Chinese investments began to build up during President Barack Obama's administration, in a pushback against globalization, and were amplified after President Donald Trump came into office, said Yilang Feng, an assistant professor of business at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who studies economic nationalism and resistance to foreign direct investments in the U.S.

"The scale has increased, so has the intensity," Feng said. As President Joe Biden's administration seeks to revive American manufacturing and boost U.S. technological capabilities, many politicians believe Chinese companies should be kept out.

"Can you imagine working for an American company working tirelessly to develop battery technology and then you find out that your tax dollars are being used to subsidize a competitor from China?" Moolenaar said as he campaigned against the Gotion project in his congressional district in a state that is critical in the presidential election.

Whitmer's office has declined to comment on the project. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation told

The Associated Press it has received "bipartisan support at all levels" to move forward with the project, which will create up to 2,350 jobs.

Danielle Emerson, spokesperson for MEDC, said the project is "critical to onshore the battery supply chain and create thousands of good-paying local jobs, which reduces our reliance on overseas disruptions and further protects our national security."

Local residents of Green Charter Township, however, revolted against the project over its Chinese connections last year when they removed five officials who supported it in a recall election.

Also in Michigan, a partnership between Ford and CATL, another Chinese battery manufacturer, has been scaled back, following pushback over CATL's potential connections to China's ruling party.

In Worcester, Massachusetts, the Chinese biotech company WuXi Biologics paused construction of a large facility a few weeks after lawmakers introduced a bill that would, over data security concerns, ban U.S. entities receiving federal funds from doing business with a number of China-linked companies, WuXi Biologics included.

John Ling, who has helped South Carolina and Georgia attract Chinese businesses

for nearly two decades, said geopolitics have been getting in the way in recent years. Chinese companies are less likely to consider South Carolina after the state senate last year approved a bill banning Chinese citizens from buying property, even though the bill has yet to clear the statehouse, Ling said. Data by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis show the total investments by China in the U.S. fell to just under \$44 billion in 2023, from a high point of \$63 billion in 2017, although first-year expenditures rose to \$621 million in 2023, up from \$531 million in 2022 but drastically down from the high of \$27 billion in 2016. The figures include acquisitions, new business establishments and expansions. Thilo Hanemann, a partner at the research provider Rhodium Group, said there's been an upswing in new Chinese investments in the U.S. following a major decline, prompted by the end of disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for Chinese companies to go overseas when margins at home are dwindling.

U.S. policymakers are worried that Chinese companies, beholden to the ruling Chinese Communist Party, could pose national security risks, he said, while Beijing is concerned that overseas invest-

ments could lead to Chinese technology leakage.

"Chinese companies are in between a rock and a hard place, dealing with both domestic governments in terms of not letting them go abroad and then the U.S. or host governments that have concerns," Hanemann said. Yet, Chinese investors may still find the U.S. market appealing "due to its high consumption levels and judicial independence," said Liu of Georgetown University.

In 2022, Michigan beat out several other states in luring Gotion, according to the governor's office. Keen to revive its manufacturing base, the state offered a package of incentives, including \$175 million in grants and the approval of a new zone that could save the company \$540 million. Local townships approved tax abatements for Gotion to build a factory to make components for electrical vehicle batteries. In Green Charter Township, the new board dropped support for the project and rescinded an agreement that would extend water to the factory site, only to be rebuked by a U.S. district judge. The future of the plant remains uncertain, as Moolenaar is rallying support for his bill that would prevent Gotion from receiving federal subsidies. He has accused the company of using forced labor, after congressional staff discovered links between the company and Xinjiang Production Construction Corps., a paramilitary group sanctioned by the U.S. Commerce Department for its involvement in China's forced labor practice.

Chuck Thelen, vice president of manufacturing of Gotion North America, in recent town hall meetings called the forced labor accusations "categorically false and clearly intended to deceive." By allowing the Chinese company to build a plant in Michigan, it would help "onshore a technology that has been vastly leapfrogged" outside of the U.S., he said. It doesn't amount to "a Chinese invasion," Thelen said. "This is a global approach, an energy solution." □

Ex-Trump attorney Jenna Ellis to cooperate in Arizona fake electors case, charges to be dropped

By JACQUES BILLEAUD

Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Former President Donald Trump's campaign attorney Jenna Ellis, who worked closely with Rudy Giuliani, will cooperate with Arizona prosecutors in exchange for charges being dropped against her in a fake electors case, the state attorney general's office announced Monday.

Ellis has previously pleaded not guilty to fraud, forgery and conspiracy charges in the Arizona case. Seventeen other people charged in the case have pleaded not guilty to the felony charges including Giuliani, Trump presidential chief of staff Mark Meadows and 11 Republicans who submitted a document to Congress falsely declaring Trump had won Arizona.

"Her insights are invaluable and will greatly aid the State in proving its case in court," Attorney General Kris Mayes said in a statement. "As I stated when the initial charges were announced, I will not allow American democracy to be undermined. It is far too important. Today's announcement is a win for the



Jenna Ellis speaks with her attorney Franklin Hogue after Ellis plead guilty to a felony count of aiding and abetting false statements and writings, Oct. 24, 2023, inside Fulton Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee's Fulton County, Ga., courtroom in Atlanta.

rule of law."

Last year, Ellis was charged in Georgia after she appeared with Giuliani at a December 2020 hearing hosted by state Republican lawmakers at the Georgia Capitol during which false allegations of election fraud were made. She had pleaded guilty in October to one felony count of aiding and abetting false statements and writings.

The cooperation agreement signed by Ellis in the Arizona case requires her to provide truthful information to the Attorney General's Office and testify honestly in proceedings in any state or federal court. Prosecutors can withdraw from the deal and refile charges if Ellis violates the agreement. Prosecutors have already asked a court to dismiss the Arizona charges against

Ellis. It wasn't immediately clear if a judge had yet approved the request.

The Associated Press left messages with Ellis' attorney, Matthew Brown, after the agreement was announced Monday. Mel McDonald, a retired lawyer and former Arizona U.S. Attorney and judge in metro Phoenix, said cooperation agreements like the one signed by Ellis are common

Associated Press

in Arizona state courts and are typically given to insiders who can explain how a crime unfolded.

"You need someone who is part of it to fill in the blanks," said McDonald, who isn't involved in the Arizona case.

While not a fake elector in Arizona, prosecutors say Ellis made false claims of widespread election fraud in the state and six others, encouraged the Arizona Legislature to change the outcome of the election and encouraged then-Vice President Mike Pence to accept Arizona's fake elector votes.

The indictment said Ellis, Giuliani and other associates were at a meeting at the Arizona Legislature on Dec. 1, 2020, with then-House Speaker Rusty Bowers and other Republicans when Giuliani and his team asked the speaker to hold a committee hearing on the election.

When Bowers asked for proof of election fraud, Giuliani said he had proof but Ellis had advised that it was left back at a hotel room, the indictment said. No proof was provided to Bowers. □

Secretaries of state urge Elon Musk to fix AI chatbot spreading election misinformation on X

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO

Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Five secretaries of state are urging Elon Musk to fix an AI chatbot on the social media platform X, saying in a letter sent Monday that it has spread election misinformation.

The top election officials from Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Washington told Musk that X's AI chatbot, Grok, produced false information about state ballot deadlines shortly after President Joe Biden dropped out of the 2024 presidential race. While Grok is available only to subscribers to the premium versions of X, the

misinformation was shared across multiple social media platforms and reached millions of people, according to the letter. The bogus ballot deadline information from the chatbot also referenced Alabama, Indiana, Ohio and Texas, although their secretaries of state did not sign the letter. Grok continued to repeat the false information for 10 days before it was corrected, the secretaries said.

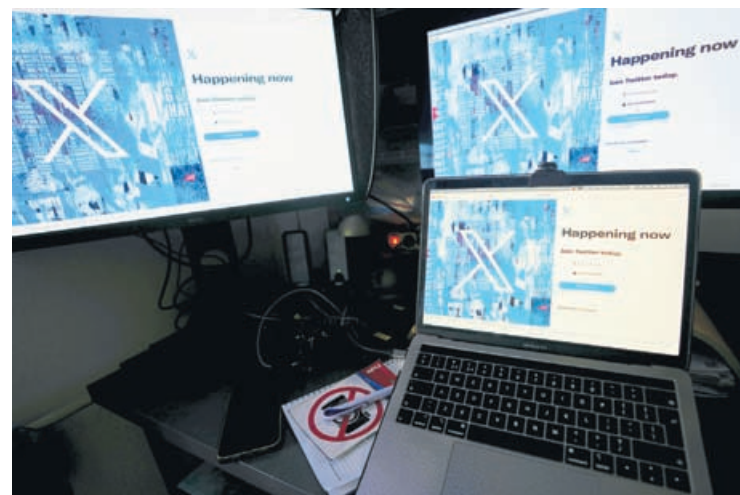
The letter urged X to immediately fix the chatbot "to ensure voters have accurate information in this critical election year." That would include directing Grok to send users to CanIVote.org, a voting in-

formation website run by the National Association of Secretaries of State, when asked about U.S. elections. "In this presidential election year, it is critically important that voters get accurate information on how to exercise their right to vote," Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon said in a statement. "Voters should reach out to their state or local election officials to find out how, when, and where they can vote."

X did not respond to a request for comment. Grok debuted last year for X premium and premium plus subscribers and was touted by Musk as a "rebellious" AI chatbot that

will answer "spicy questions that are rejected by most other AI systems." Social media platforms

have faced mounting scrutiny for their role in spreading misinformation, including about elections. □



Computer monitors and a laptop display the X, formerly known as Twitter, sign-in page, July 24, 2023, in Belgrade, Serbia.

Associated Press

Prosecutors plan to charge former Kansas police chief over his conduct following newspaper raid

By JOHN HANNA
Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Two special prosecutors said Monday that they plan to charge a former central Kansas police chief with obstruction of justice over his conduct following a police raid last year on the local weekly newspaper. Prosecutors Marc Bennett and Barry Wilkerson concluded in their 124-page report that the staff at the Marion County Record committed no crimes before former Marion Police Chief Gideon Cody led a raid on its offices and the home of its publisher. They said police warrants signed by a judge to allow the searches contained inaccurate information from an “inadequate investigation” and that the searches were not legally justified. Police body camera footage of the 2023 raid on Publisher Eric Meyer’s home shows his 98-year-old mother, Joan Meyer, visibly upset and telling officers, “Get out of my house!” She co-owned the paper, lived with her son and died of a heart attack the next af-



A stack of the Marion County Record sits in the back of the newspaper’s building, awaiting unbundling, sorting and distribution, Aug. 16, 2023, in Marion, Kan.

ternoon. Prosecutors found no evidence officers “believed they were posing a risk to Mrs. Meyer’s life,” but they allege Cody obstructed an official judicial process in the weeks after the raid. He resigned as chief last October. It wasn’t clear whether officials planned to charge him with a felony or a misdemeanor, and ei-

ther is possible. The criminal complaint had not been filed as of Monday. “Small town familiarity explains but does not excuse the inadequate investigation that gave rise to the search warrant applications in this matter,” prosecutors said in their report. Bennett is the district attorney in Sedgwick County,

home to the state’s largest city of Wichita; and Wilkerson is the chief prosecutor in Riley County in northeastern Kansas. The state’s attorney general appointed them after the Marion County prosecutor who faced questions himself about the search warrants said he had conflict. The raid sparked a national de-

bate about press freedom focused on Marion, a town of about 1,900 people set among rolling prairie hills about 150 miles (241 kilometers) southwest of Kansas City, Missouri. Seth Stern, director of the Freedom of the Press Foundation, said in a statement that Cody should face other charges in addition to obstruction of justice. “The raid itself was criminal,” he said. “And Cody is far from the only one at fault here.” Meyer said in an interview that he’s grateful prosecutors found that the newspaper’s staff committed no crimes, though he questioned why it took them a full year. He also expressed frustration that Cody is the only official expected to face criminal prosecution. “What I feel is going on here is that he’s been set up as the fall guy,” Meyer said. The newspaper’s parent company, Meyer and three current or former staffers have filed federal lawsuits against the city of Marion and current and former local officials, including Cody. □

Associated Press

Flag contest: Mainers to vote on adopting a pine tree design paying homage to state’s 1st flag

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — Mainers are going to decide in November whether to adopt a new flag, one that tracks closely with the state’s first flag. The design by contest winner Adam Lemire of Gardiner features a soaring pine tree in two shades of green, and a blue star against an off-white background. It was unveiled by Secretary of State Shenna Bellows on Monday, selected from more than 400 submissions from 42 different states as well as a few entries from abroad, she said. Bellows described it as “a beautiful, faithful representation” of an Eastern white pine, Maine’s ubiquitous tree species that was used for the masts of sailing

ships and gave rise to the state’s nickname, the Pine Tree State. “Should voters vote yes to Question 5 in November, we will have a beautiful state flag that honors our past and our future,” she said. The contest required designs to pay homage to the state’s first flag, used from 1901 to 1909. A stylized version of the first flag took the state by storm during the Maine’s bicentennial in 2020, and has appeared on hats, sweatshirts and soon license plates. The popularity played a role in lawmakers’ decision to let Mainers vote on replacing the current flag, which features the state’s official seal, a lumberjack, a sailor and the state’s mot-

to, Dirigo. That’s Latin for “I lead,” a reference to the north star. The current flag hasn’t been controversial, just rather boring, and overly similar to other state flags with official seals on blue backgrounds, critics said. The law required Bellows to present the final design, so she launched the contest. The design process was not without some controversy, when news reports of a similar-looking flag flown at the vacation home of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito. That flag, featuring a pine tree and the words “AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN,” dates to the Revolutionary War, but has recently been associated with the Christian nationalist movement and the false claim that the 2020

presidential election was stolen. □



This photo provided by the State of Maine/Secretary of State show the winning design of a flag contest, announced by Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows, right, released by the state of Maine on Monday, Aug. 5, 2024. Mainers will vote in November on adopting the design by Adam Lemire, left, of Gardiner as the official flag for the state of Maine.

Associated Press

U.K. prime minister talks of 'standing army' of police to deal with rioting across Britain

By BRIAN MELLEY and DAN-ICA KIRKA

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Monday that a "standing army" of specialist police would be set up to deal with rioting and that the justice system would be ramped up to handle hundreds of arrests after violent disorder rocked cities across the nation over the past week.

Starmer convened an urgent meeting after lawlessness he blamed on "far-right thuggery" that was driven in part by misinformation on social media that whipped up anger over a stabbing rampage at a dance class that killed three girls and wounded 10 people. False rumors spread online that the suspect was a Muslim asylum-seeker led to attacks on immigrants and mosques.

"Whatever the apparent motivation, this is not protest. It is pure violence and we will not tolerate attacks on mosques or our Muslim communities," Starmer said. "The full force of the law will be visited on all those who are identified as having taken part in these activities." On Sunday, an-



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer leaves 10 Downing Street to attend the weekly Prime Ministers' Questions session in parliament in London, July 24, 2024.

gry mobs attacked two hotels used to house asylum seekers, breaking windows and lighting fires before police dispersed the crowds and residents were evacuated. Dozens of police officers have been hospitalized for injuries in the past six days after being struck with bricks, bottles and large wooden posts. More than 375 people have been arrested in the mayhem so far and more

are expected, the National Police Chiefs' Council said. Many made court appearances Monday and found themselves facing at least several weeks behind bars awaiting their next court hearing. Deputy District Judge Liam McStay in Belfast Magistrates' Court refused bail for two men who had participated in a march that trashed businesses and set a supermarket on fire in the capital of

Northern Ireland. He said he couldn't allow that to be repeated and "visited on other people." "The events at the weekend were absolutely disgraceful: a concerted and deliberate attempt to undermine public order and to then domineer the community and there were racist elements to it," McStay said. "The message has to be if you allow yourself to become involved in these

matters for whatever reason, then you will face the consequences."

Starmer's plan to beef up the criminal justice system and deliver quick justice faces significant challenges as courts are already backed up and prisons are so overcrowded that plans were already in the works to release inmates early, said Cassia Rowland, a senior researcher at the Institute for Government think tank. "That's not a problem you can fix overnight and it's going to be difficult, I think, for the system to cope with the influx of demand that we're likely to see as a result of this disorder," Rowland said.

Starmer has dismissed calls to reconvene Parliament to deal with the crisis or send in the army. His office said police can handle the disorder. In the meeting with ministers and top law enforcement officials, Starmer said social media companies have not done enough to prevent the spread of misinformation that has fueled far-right violence and vowed that anyone who stokes the disorder online or on the streets could face prison, a spokesperson said. □

Associated Press

U.S. hands over the last military base in Niger to the ruling junta

By MARK BANCHEREAU

Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — The U.S. handed over its last military base in Niger one of two crucial hubs for American counterterrorism operations in the country to local authorities, the U.S. Department of Defense and Niger's Ministry of Defense announced in a joint statement on Monday. The handing over of Airbase 201 in the city of Agadez came after the U.S. troops withdrew earlier this month from Airbase 101, a small drone base in Niger's capital of Niamey. U.S. troops have until Sept. 15 to leave the Sahel country following an agreement

with Nigerien authorities. There are about two dozen American soldiers who remain in Niger, largely for administrative duties related to the withdrawal, according to Sabrina Singh, the Pentagon spokeswoman. They are located at the U.S. embassy. In March, Niger's ruling junta ended an agreement that allowed U.S. troops to operate in the West African country. A few months later, officials of the two countries announced in a joint statement that U.S. troops would complete their withdrawal by the middle of September. Niger had been seen as

one of the last nations in the restive region that Western nations could partner with to beat back growing jihadi insurgencies. The U.S. and France had more than 2,500 military personnel in the region until recently, and together with other European countries had invested hundreds of millions of dollars in military assistance and training. In recent months Niger has pulled away from its Western partners, turning instead to Russia for security. In April, Russian military trainers arrived in Niger to reinforce the country's air defenses. Niger's ouster of American troops following a coup last



U.S. and Niger military personnel visits the infrastructure at the U.S. Army base in Agadez, Niger, Monday, Aug 5, 2024.

Associated Press

year has broad ramifications for the U.S. because it is forcing troops to abandon the critical base that was used for counterterrorism missions in the Sahel, a vast region south of the Sahara desert where groups linked to al-Qaida and the

Islamic State group operate. One of those groups, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, known as JNIM, is active in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger and is looking to expand into Benin and Togo. □

Colombia's congress considers ban on Pablo Escobar souvenirs

By **MANUEL RUEDA**

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) —

Souvenirs depicting the late Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar could be banned in Colombia if legislators approve a bill introduced this week in the nation's congress. The proposal is criticized by vendors who sell his merchandise to tourists from around the world, but backed by those who believe the country should shed its image of mafia bosses.

The bill proposes fines of up to \$170 for vendors who sell merchandise that depicts Escobar and other convicted criminals, and would also enable police to fine those who wear t-shirts, hats and other garments that "exalt" the infamous drug lord.

"These items are revictimizing people who were victims of murderers," said Cristian Avendaño, a representative from Colombia's Green Party who drafted the bill. "We must protect the right of the victims to recover...and find other symbols for our country."

The proposal has been widely covered by news-



Tourists buy souvenirs of the late drug lord Pablo Escobar, featured as a statue with a sign that says one will be charged for taking photos inside a store in Doradal, Colombia, Feb. 5, 2021.

Associated Press

papers in Colombia, where Escobar is seen as a murderous figure, linked to one of the most violent periods in the nation's history.

At the same time, the drug trafficker's image is also heavily commercialized by locals who are eager to cash in on the growing fascination with the drug lord,

among some tourists from North America, Europe and other Latin American countries.

Souvenir vendors in Bogota's historic La Candelaria neighborhood said they were opposed to the initiative, which has been criticized for attempting to limit freedom of speech.

"I think it's a dumb law," said Rafael Nieto, a street vendor who sells magnets, and t-shirts with Pablo Escobar's face on them, as well as more traditional souvenirs.

Nieto said he would stop selling Escobar merchandise if the bill is approved, to "avoid problems" with

police. But he added that members of Colombia's Congress should instead focus their energies on lowering the city's crime rate, and let him carry on with his business.

"Many people make a living from this" Nieto said pointing at a t-shirt that shows a copy of Pablo Escobar's Colombian ID card.

"It's not a trend that I came up with" Nieto added. "The Mexicans, the Costa Ricans, the Americans, are always asking me for Escobar" merchandise.

Another street vendor, who asked to be identified only as Lorena, said that she has also stocked up on items that depict the drug dealer, such as shot glasses, and magnets, because it is what international tourists are demanding, along with souvenirs depicting coca leaves.

"When you work as a vendor, you try to sell what is most popular," Lorena said. "Everyone has their own personality, and if there are people who like a murderer, or a drug trafficker, well, that's their choice." □

As Instagram remains blocked in Turkey, Erdogan accuses social media companies of 'digital fascism'

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) —

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused social media platforms of "digital fascism" on Monday for allegedly censoring photographs of Palestinian "martyrs."

The Turkish leader's comments came as Turkish officials were engaged in discussions with representatives of the social media platform, Instagram, to reinstate access to millions of its users in Turkey.

The Information and Communication Technologies Authority barred access to Instagram on Aug. 2 without providing a reason. Government officials said the ban was imposed because Instagram failed to abide by Turkish regulations.

Several media reports said however, that the action

was in response to Instagram removing posts by Turkish users that expressed condolences over the killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh. It was the latest instance of a clampdown on websites in the

country which has a track record of censoring social media and other online platforms.

"They cannot even tolerate photographs of Palestinian martyrs and immediately ban them," Erdogan said



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan speaks during a news conference in Ankara, Turkey, May 13, 2024.

Associated Press

at a human rights event. "We are confronted with a digital fascism that is disguised as freedom."

Unlike its Western allies, Turkey does not consider Hamas a terror organization. A strong critic of Israel's military actions in Gaza, Erdogan has described the group as a liberation movement.

Erdogan went on to state that social media websites were allegedly allowing all kinds of propaganda by groups considered terrorists in Turkey.

"We have tried to establish a line of dialogue through our relevant institutions. However, we have not yet been able to achieve the desired cooperation," Erdogan said.

The transportation and infrastructure minister, Ab-

dulkadir Uraloglu, said Turkish authorities had met with representatives of the Meta-owned company last week and held a fresh round of talks on Monday without reaching a resolution.

"We didn't get the exact result we wanted," Uraloglu said. "We don't think there will be any progress today." Instagram has more than 57 million users in Turkey, a nation of 85 million people, according to We Are Social Media, a digital marketing news company based in New York.

The Electronic Commerce Operators' Association estimates that Instagram and other social media platforms per day generate about 930 million Turkish lira (\$27 million) worth of e-commerce. □

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Costa Linda Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassadors

Mr. Larry Lail & Mrs. Debbie Lail from Cynthia and Kentucky, United States.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Costa Linda Beach Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's people.
- Aruba is safe.
- Aruba's weather.
- Aruba's restaurants.
- "We Love Costa Linda Beach Resort"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □



Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!



NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pound-

ing surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long

and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass. The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass."

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural pro-



cesses, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass.

Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted

beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! □



A guide for the perfect picture

Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad

(Oranjestad)—Imagine, you're taking a stroll in the city center, and you want to take the most picture-perfect photo to show your friends and family back home and online. It seems like the perfect spot can be hard to find, but Oranjestad is full of great spots for a quick snapshot! Here are the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad.

"I LOVE ARUBA"



Right on Paardenbaai Plaza, near the harbor entrance, you will spot a giant sign

that reads "I LOVE ARUBA". A great first stop for a quick shot with the family, this spot is among the few that has become a favorite among tourists, especially those



that are visiting Aruba through a cruise vacation.

Speaking of giant signs that read "Aruba" (because there can never be too many), there is another sign you can find along the Linear Park, in front of Talk of the Town Hotel. It may be a long walk from the harbor to get there, but while you're at it, check out these other spots along the way!



The sitting bull

Yes, you read that right; right in the heart of the city center, in front of the Crystal Casino in the Renaissance Mall, there is a black bull sitting on a bench, waiting for you to take a picture with it. Ok, so it's not a real bull, but "I took a picture with a sitting bull" sounds like a great conversation opener.

See if you can also spot the cow on the roof!

Wooden Swing on Plaza Daniel Leo

While you're in front of the Renaissance Mall, check out the wooden swing on

the other side of the mall on Plaza Daniel Leo. Another favorite among visitors wanting a cute snapshot for Instagram. Just pass through the Renaissance Mall and find this gem in front of the back entrance!

Since you've made it this far, one question: How many blue horses have you spotted already?

Renaissance Dock
Last but certainly not least, the Renaissance Dock is the perfect spot to take a beautiful picture, especially at sunset. The dock is located behind the Renaissance Market Place, and runs from the Renaissance Marina up to Renaissance Beach and Wilhelmina Park. This spot offers a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset, accompanied by the soft waves crashing on the shoreline. You may even spot some iguanas!☐

Experience Aruban culture with this exciting theme night featuring a Carnival show, mixology bar, local artists and more. You can sample Aruban cuisine, including delicious BBQ options with a tropical twist. A local brass band will be performing, and you can pose with elaborately dressed Carnival dancers for a memorable photo op as well, so don't miss it.

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Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill



(Oranjestad)—If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning work out session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompanied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon

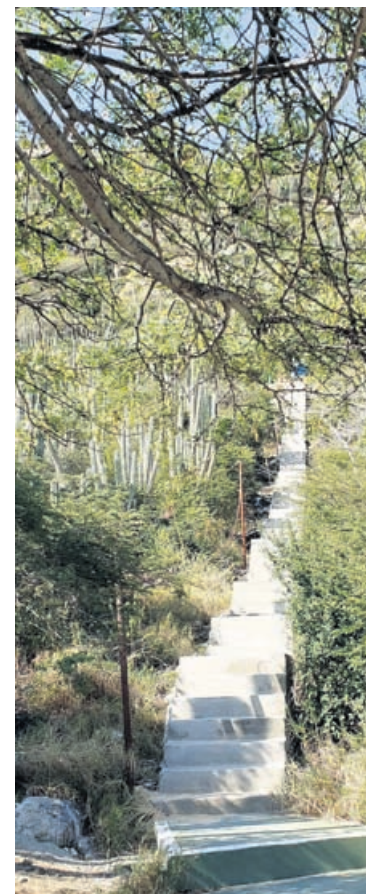
in Venezuela, providing one of the best views you can get on Aruba.

located at the center district of the island, Santa Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about 540 feet above sea level). The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok National Park.

The staircase that run on the side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Eduardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consisted of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the newer staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be fooled—it may still

be a work out to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a sight to see.

The best time to climb the hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day. □



Aruba Tourism Authority honored a loyal visitor at Aruba Beach Club!



The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing a Goodwill Ambassador of Aruba. The honoree was respectively honored with a certificate for her years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honoree was:

Goodwill Ambassador

Ms. Lorraine Bartlett from Swampscott Massachusetts, United States.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Aruba Beach Club bestowed the certificate upon the honoree, presented her with gifts, and thanked her for choosing Aruba as her favorite vacation destination, as her home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honoree was:

- Aruba's people.
- Aruba's beach.
- Aruba's restaurants.
- "Staff at Aruba Beach Club"
- "Home away from home"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honoree for her continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □



For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park. It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The enemies of the casca-

bel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cucularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting. These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the Shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color. The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and

Unique fauna of Aruba

lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction of their habitat.

Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

Conew (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigronuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Conew, has spread all over the island and has become part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Conew can live in

a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Conew has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

The Aruban Conew is an endangered species and protected by Aruban law. The Conew is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Conew can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits. Sadly, the Boas are back on the rise again with the truly wet rainy seasons we have recently experienced. This could cause a new decline in the Conew population that was just starting to recover.

These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. For more information, visit <https://www.arubanationalpark.org/main/flora-fauna/> □



Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the time, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherland Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with



only one way to generate profit at the time for the subsistence of Aruban families."

It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertainment and cultural manifestations were mostly experienced by local parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to share poetry on Sundays after church.

Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much

trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island in the mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piterrella, as well as migrant authors José

Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelkboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness within the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu,

but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/ Dera Gai (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. □

Source: *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 41 Less bright
1 Book of maps
6 Puts away entries
11 Rein for rover
12 Insertion sign

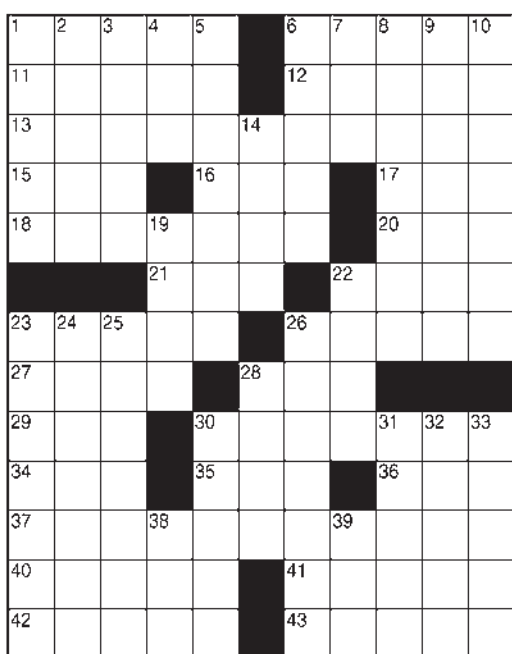
DOWN

- 1 Island greeting
2 Choir member
3 In a while
4 Tough wood
5 Stalk bundles
6 Bawl out
7 Letter after sigma
8 Satellite
9 Mat word
10 More precipitous
14 Losing scheme
19 Wild about
22 Does a yard job
23 Angriily rebuke
24 Wide sweep
25 Ghost
26 Morally bad
28 Biting remark
30 Small sounds
31 Stately
32 Does nothing
33 Jury members
38 Engine sound
39 Butter unit



Yesterday's answer

- 23 Kicks back
26 Kitchen gadget
27 Trade fair
28 Gift topper
29 Clumsy one
30 Carrot's cousin
34 Buddy
35 Make mistakes
36 Keats work
37 Uncertain of success
40 Deplete



5-14

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-14

CRYPTOQUOTE

QWU YRRPT SGU NRXUNK,
PSGJ SMP PUUC, ABQ H WSXU
CGRDHTUT QR JUUC, SMP
DHNUT QR ER AUVRGU H
TNUUC. — GRAUGQ VGR TQ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: A HARMONIOUS FAMILY LEADS TO PROSPERITY IN EVERYTHING — CHINESE PROVERB

Cruise ship Schedule: August 6 - 27 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
TUE	06	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL HORIZON CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS	08.00 09.00 13.00	20.00 22.00 23.00	B C I	1 1 1
WED	07	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	13	CELEBRITY BEYOND CARNIVAL CELEBRATION CARNIVAL VISTA	08.00 08.00 13.00	21.00 22.00 23.00	B C I	1 1 1
THU	14	ENCHANTED PRINCESS	08.00	18.00	C	1
WED	20	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
WED	27	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

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24/7

Microplastics are everywhere, but are they harming us?

By **MIKE STOBBE**
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Microplastics have been found in the ocean and the air, in our food and water. They have been found in a wide range of body tissues, including the heart, liver, kidneys and even testicles. But are they actually harming you?

Evidence suggests they might, but it's limited in scope. Some researchers are worried, but acknowledge there are lots of unanswered questions.

Dr. Marya Zlatnik, a San Francisco-based obstetrician who has studied environmental toxins and pregnancy, has seen studies raising concerns about microplastics' impact on the health of babies and adults.

But it's a young research field, and it's not something she generally discusses with patients.

"I'm not entirely sure what to say yet," Zlatnik said. Here's a look at what's known so far:

WHAT ARE MICROPLASTICS?

Plastics are man-made materials many of them derived from oil or other petroleum products. They can break down into smaller particles, through exposure to heat and weather and even animal digestion.

Researchers have increasingly been interested in microplastics, which can be as wide as a pencil eraser or as small as a fraction of the width of a human hair. Nanoplastics, another area of study, are even smaller. These minuscule plastics have been detected in air, water and soil, in milk, and in bottled and tap drinking water. They also have been found in a variety of foods, including salt, sugar, honey, rice and seafood.

ARE THERE MICROPLASTICS IN YOU?

Most likely yes.

There is scientific debate about how much people inhale and ingest, and it can vary on what they eat



A blue rectangular piece of microplastic sits on the finger of a researcher with the University of Washington-Tacoma environmental science program, after it was found in debris collected from the Thea Foss Waterway, in Tacoma, Wash., on May 19, 2010.

Associated Press

and drink and where they live, researchers say.

Some Australian researchers, on behalf of the World Wildlife Fund, calculated in 2019 that many people each week consume roughly 5 grams of plastic from common food and beverages the equivalent of a credit card. That estimate is not universally embraced by researchers, but is commonly mentioned in news articles.

Researchers are still trying to understand exposure levels, but study after study

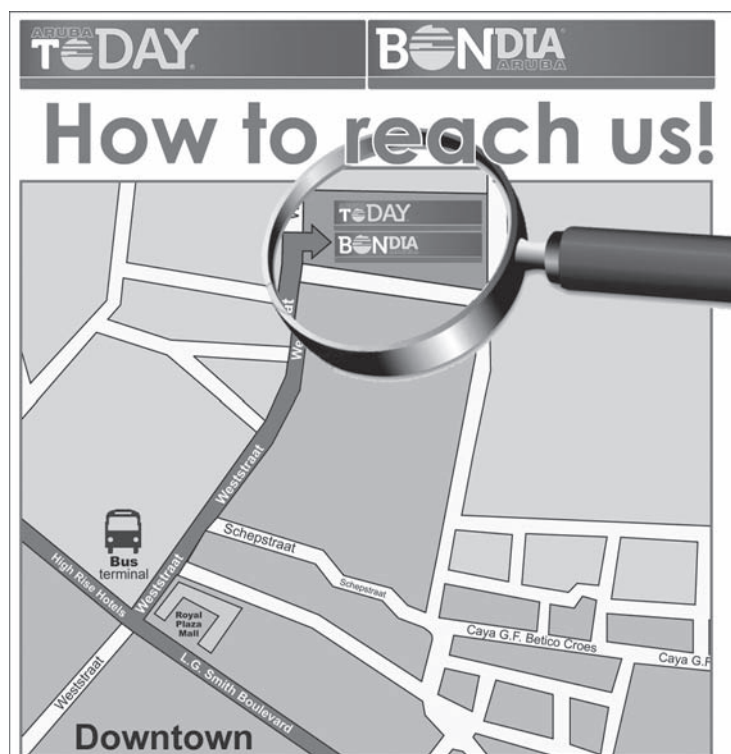
is finding signs of plastics in body tissues.

"Microplastics have been measured in pretty much all of the body tissues that have been evaluated," said Tracey Woodruff, a University of California at San Francisco researcher. Scientists have even reported finding them in the penis, in ovaries and in placentas.

WILL MICROPLASTICS HURT YOU?

That's still being sorted out. A 2022 World Health Organization report concluded

there was no clear risk to human health, based on the available evidence. □



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San Nicolas:

Aloe: Tel. 584 4606

OTHER

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002

Urgent Care 586 0448

Walk-In Doctor's Clinic

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EMERGENCY

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Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank	Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired	Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous	Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous	Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional	Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes	Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention	Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club	Tel. 525 2672

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Google loses massive antitrust case over its search dominance

By **MATTHEW BARAKAT and MICHAEL LIETKE**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A judge on Monday ruled that Google's ubiquitous search engine has been illegally exploiting its dominance to squash competition and stifle innovation in a seismic decision that could shake up the internet and hobble one of the world's best-known companies.

The highly anticipated decision issued by U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta comes nearly a year after the start of a trial pitting the U.S. Justice Department against Google in the country's biggest antitrust showdown in a quarter century.

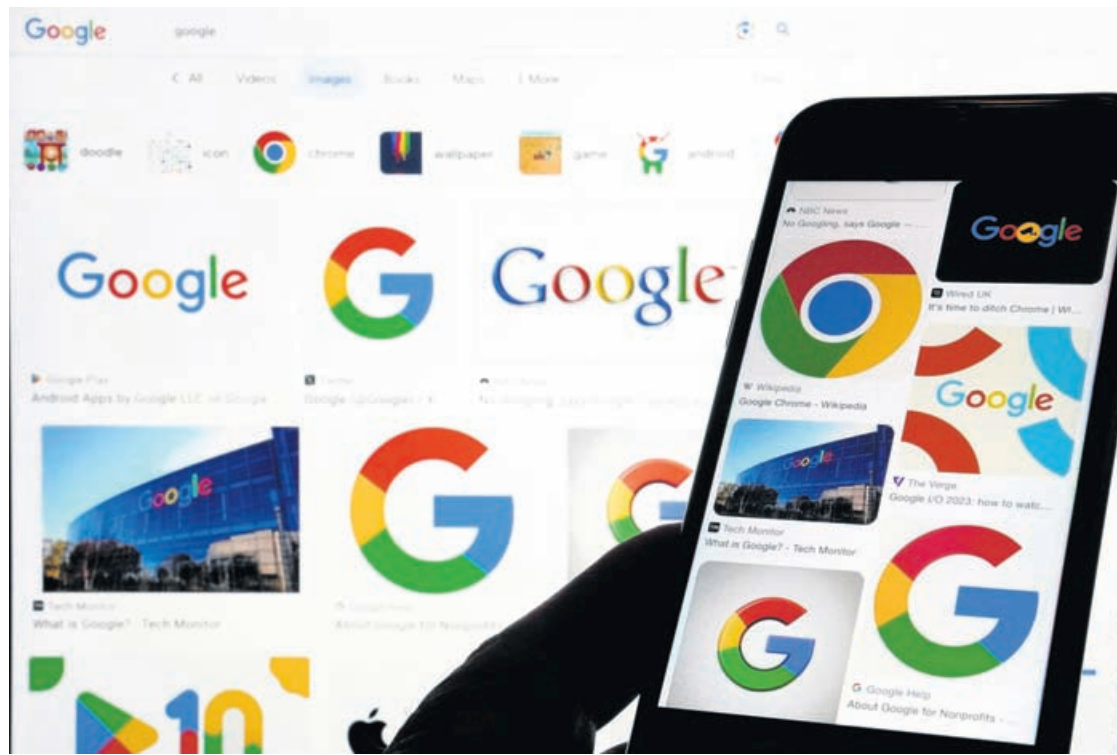
After reviewing reams of evidence that included testimony from top executives at Google, Microsoft and Apple during last year's 10-week trial, Mehta issued his potentially market-shifting decision three months after the two sides presented their closing arguments in early May.

"After having carefully considered and weighed the witness testimony and evidence, the court reaches the following conclusion: Google is a monopolist, and it has acted as one to maintain its monopoly," Mehta wrote in his 277-page ruling.

It represents a major setback for Google and its parent, Alphabet Inc., which had steadfastly argued that its popularity stemmed from consumers' overwhelming desire to use a search engine so good at what it does that it has become synonymous with looking things up online. Google's search engine currently processes an estimated 8.5 billion queries per day worldwide, nearly doubling its daily volume from 12 years ago, according to a recent study released by the investment firm BOND.

Google almost certainly will appeal the decision in a process that ultimately may land in the U.S. Supreme Court.

For now, the decision vin-



Various Google logos are displayed on a Google search, Monday, Sept. 11, 2023, in New York. Associated Press

icates antitrust regulators at the Justice Department, which filed its lawsuit nearly four years ago while Donald Trump was still president, and has been escalating its efforts to rein in Big Tech's power during President Joe Biden's administration.

The case depicted Google as a technological bully that methodically has thwarted competition to protect a search engine that has become the centerpiece of a digital advertising machine that generated nearly \$240 billion in revenue last year. Justice Department lawyers argued that Google's monopoly enabled it to charge advertisers artificially high prices while also enjoying the luxury of not having to invest more time and money into improving the quality of its search engine a lax approach that hurt consumers.

As expected, Mehta's ruling focused on the billions of dollars Google spends every year to install its search engine as the default option on new cell phones and tech gadgets.

In 2021 alone, Google spent more than \$26 billion to lock in those default agreements, Mehta said in his ruling.

Google ridiculed those allegations, noting that consumers have historically changed search engines

when they become disillusioned with the results they were getting. For instance, Yahoo now a minor player on the internet was the most popular search engine during the 1990s before Google came along.

Mehta said the evidence at trial showed the importance of the default settings. He noted that Microsoft's Bing search engine has 80% share of the search market on the Microsoft Edge browser. The judge said that shows other search engines can be successful if Google is not locked in as the predetermined default option.

Still, Mehta credited the quality of Google's product as an important part of its dominance, as well, saying flatly that "Google is widely recognized as the best (general search engine) available in the United States."

Mehta's conclusion that Google has been running an illegal monopoly sets up another legal phase to determine what sorts of changes or penalties should be imposed to reverse the damage done and restore a more competitive landscape.

The potential outcome could result in a wide-ranging order requiring Google to dismantle some of the pillars of its internet empire

or prevent it from shelling out billions annually to ensure its search engine automatically answers queries on the iPhone and other internet-connected devices. After the next phase, the judge could conclude only modest changes are required to level the playing field.

If there is a significant shakeup, it could turn out to be a coup for Microsoft, whose own power was undermined during the late 1990s when the Justice Department targeted the software maker in an antitrust lawsuit accusing it of abusing the dominance of its Windows operating system on personal computers to lock out competition.

That Microsoft case mirrored the one brought against Google in several ways and now the result could also echo similarly. Just as Microsoft's bruising antitrust battle created distractions and obstacles that opened up more opportunities for Google after its 1998 inception, the decision against Google could be a boon for Microsoft, which already has a market value of more than \$3 trillion. At one time, Alphabet was worth more than Microsoft, but now trails its rival with a market value of about \$2 trillion. Besides boosting Microsoft's Bing

search engine, the outcome could hurt Google at a critical pivot point that is tilting technology in the age of artificial intelligence. Both Microsoft and Google are among the early leaders in AI in a battle that now could be affected by Mehta's market-rattling decision.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella was one of the Justice Department's star witnesses during the testimony that covered his frustration with Google deals with the likes of Apple that made it nearly impossible for the Bing search engine to make any headway, even as Microsoft poured more than \$100 billion in improvements since 2009.

"You get up in the morning, you brush your teeth and you search on Google," Nadella said at one point in his testimony. "Everybody talks about the open web, but there is really the Google web."

Nadella also expressed fear that it might take an antitrust crackdown to ensure the situation didn't get worse as AI becomes a bigger force in search.

"Despite my enthusiasm that there is a new angle with A.I., I worry a lot that this vicious cycle that I'm trapped in could get even more vicious," Nadella said on the stand.

Google still faces other legal threats besides this one, both in the U.S. and abroad. any antitrust lawsuits brought against Google domestically and abroad. In September, a federal trial is scheduled to begin in Virginia over the Justice Department's allegations that Google's advertising technology constitutes an illegal monopoly. □



Simone Biles caps Paris Olympics 'Redemption Tour' with one last medal silver in floor routine

By WILL GRAVES
AP National Writer

PARIS (AP) — The "Redemption Tour" did not end with a golden encore for Simone Biles.

By the time she entered Bercy Arena for the beam and floor exercise finals on Monday, she was drained. Mentally. Physically. All of it. It's what this event does. What this sport does.

No one knows that better than the 27-year-old who has spent the last decade relentlessly propelling gymnastics both competitively and culturally forward.

So when Biles hopped off balance beam to miss out on one medal, then stepped out of bounds twice during her floor routine to finish second in her signature event for the first time in memory, she shrugged.

Gymnastics happens. Even to the greats. Even to the GOAT.

The woman who didn't think she'd even be here a couple of years ago will leave Paris and perhaps her final Olympics with three golds and a silver and something perhaps even more valuable: peace.

"I accomplished way more than my wildest dreams, not just at this Olympics, but in the sport," the 11-time Olympic medalist said. "So I can't be mad at the



Simone Biles, of the United States, holds up her medals after the women's artistic gymnastics individual apparatus finals Bercy Arena at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Monday, Aug. 5, 2024, in Paris, France.

performances. ... Competing then walking away with four medals. I'm not mad about it."

Biles certainly didn't look mad during the awards ceremony after the floor exercise the first one of her career at a major competition that ended with her looking up at someone else.

Instead, she and good friend and bronze medalist Jordan Chiles bowed to Rebeca Andrade, the Brazilian who has spent the last three years as the best

gymnast in the world not named Biles.

"It was just the right thing to do," Biles said. "She's queen."

Then the three Black women posed together on the podium four days after Biles, Andrade and Sunisa Lee, who is Hmong-American, stood in the same spot following the all-around. Their collective success is symbolic of a sport that is becoming more diverse and more inclusive at the highest level, led by someone who still describes her-

self as "Simone Biles from Spring, Texas who flips."

For a long time, the flipping is what separated Biles from everyone else. Her routines are packed with so much difficulty that a wobble here or a step out of bounds there ultimately hasn't mattered.

It did in what could be the final routine of her career. Bothered perhaps by a left calf injury she aggravated during qualifying last week, Biles wasn't at her best during a 75-second set that features music from

pop icons Taylor Swift and Beyonce and the hardest tumbling passes ever done by a woman.

Twice at the end of the passes that feature elements bearing her name in the sport's Code of Points, her feet landed on blue boundary, costing her valuable tenths and creating just enough room for Andrade's score of 14.166 to stand.

When a 14.133 and the No. 2 indicating she was still in second flashed next to Biles' name, a packed arena that included NFL icon Tom Brady let out an "ooohhhh" of surprise.

Biles was not one of them.

"I'm not very upset or anything about my performance at the Olympics," she said. "I'm happy, proud and even more excited that it's over."

Whether it's fully over, she's not saying. Though Chiles may have offered a hint as they talked to reporters afterward, with Chiles leaning over and saying under her breath "I'm going to miss you man."

So will gymnastics. The Olympics too.

Biles' 11 career medals at the Games (seven gold, two silver, two bronze) ties Czechoslovakia's Vera Caslavskaja for the second-most by a female gymnast in Olympic history. □

Associated Press

A rebuilt bronze Jackie Robinson statue will be unveiled 6 months after the original was stolen

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — A rebuilt statue of Jackie Robinson in bronze will be welcomed home Monday by Little League players and former Major League Baseball All-Stars, just over six months after the original was destroyed by thieves. The original sculpture of the baseball icon resting a bat on his shoulder was cut off at its ankles in January, leaving only Robinson's cleats behind at McAdams Park in Wichita, Kansas. An identical statue will return to the park, where about 600 children play in

the urban youth baseball league called League 42, which was founded in 2013 and named after Robinson's uniform number with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Playing for the Dodgers, Robinson broke Major League Baseball's racial barrier in 1947.

The community is expected to be joined Monday by representatives of Major League Baseball and former players, including All-Stars CC Sabathia and Delin Betances, according to League 42 posts on social media.

The nonprofit was met with an outpouring of support and hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations after news of the stolen statue shocked the community and spread across the country.

Bob Lutz, League 42 executive director, said this year that the donations helped fund the replacement statue, as well as improvements to the plaza where it stands, the nonprofit's facilities and its programming. Firefighters found burned remnants of the original statue five days after it



Nate Ford, left, and Jeff Herndon apply finishing touches to a statue of baseball hall-of-famer and civil rights pioneer Jackie Robinson in Loveland, Colo., on Wednesday, July 24, 2024.

Associated Press

disappeared. One man pleaded guilty and will spend about 15 years in prison, although most of

that time is related to a burglary that happened a few days after the statue heist. □

Jim Harbaugh has best track record of 8 new head coaches but Morris has better shot at playoffs

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

At least one NFL team with a new coach has reached the playoffs every year since the 2006 season.

DeMeco Ryans took over in Houston last year and led the Texans from worst to first in the AFC South. With AP Offensive Rookie of the Year C.J. Stroud and Defensive Rookie of the Year Will Anderson Jr. leading the way, the Texans advanced to the divisional round. In 2022, a record five first-year coaches guided their teams to the playoffs. Eight teams enter this season with a new man in charge. Of those eight new head coaches, Jim Harbaugh has the proven track record to make the most immediate impact. Harbaugh returned to the NFL after leading Michigan to a national championship, bringing with him a 44-19-1 career record in four seasons with the 49ers from 2011-14.

But Harbaugh's Chargers are in a tough division. The two-time defending Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs own the AFC West. They've won it eight straight years.

The Chargers won't have quarterback Justin Herbert for at least the next two weeks due to a foot injury so Harbaugh's job is even more difficult.

Here's all the new coaches aiming to win now.

JIM HARBAUGH

The Chargers have reached the playoffs just once in Herbert's four season. They blew a 27-0 lead against Jacksonville in a wild-card game two years ago. Brandon Staley was fired last season before the team finished 5-12.

Harbaugh has a winning pedigree and the Chargers should rebound from a poor season. Still, they're not ready to dethrone the Chiefs. Nine wins and a chance at a wild-card berth would be a positive first step.

BRIAN CALLAHAN

The Tennessee Titans fired Mike Vrabel after consecu-



Los Angeles Chargers head coach Jim Harbaugh speaks at a news conference after NFL football training camp Monday, July 29, 2024, in El Segundo, Calif.

Associated Press

tive losing seasons and replaced him with Callahan, who was Cincinnati's offensive coordinator. He won't have Joe Burrow, Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins to work with in Tennessee. Callahan's top priority is to develop quarterback Will Levis. The Titans added playmakers in free agency, signing wide receiver Calvin Ridley and running back Tony Pollard.

Callahan, who relinquished play-calling duties to Zac Taylor last season with the Bengals, has a tough task in a division with the Texans, Jaguars and Colts. Six or seven wins is the expectation.

DAVE CANALES

After helping Baker Mayfield revive his career in Tampa Bay in one season as the Buccaneers' offensive coordinator, Canales is aiming to engineer another dramatic turnaround in Carolina. The Panthers fired Frank Reich just 11 games into his first season and finished 2-15 in 2023. They didn't even have the No. 1 pick as consolation, having traded it a year earlier in the package that brought Bryce Young to Carolina.

If Canales can get the most out of Young the way he did with Mayfield in Tampa Bay and Geno Smith in Seattle, the Panthers will be competitive. They bolstered the offensive line to protect Young and added wide receivers Diontae Johnson and Xavier Legette. Six or seven wins would be a major improvement.

MIKE MACDONALD

The Seattle Seahawks went 9-8 last season before Pete Carroll's abrupt departure. Macdonald, who was Baltimore's defensive coordinator, inherits a team that came close to another playoff berth. Still, the Seahawks could regress this season.

Smith didn't match his 2022 breakout production and Sam Howell came in to provide competition and insurance. The offense has several playmakers and the defense is where Macdonald will make the most impact. He has a strong front to work with bolstered by the addition of first-round pick Byron Murphy. Seattle will need Smith to play like he did two years ago to surpass seven or eight wins.

JEROD MAYO

Bill Belichick's time with the Patriots has ended and no one is likely to match what he accomplished in two decades, winning six Super Bowls. But Mayo's immediate goal is to bring respectability back to New England. The gold standard of franchises hasn't been the same since Tom Brady left after the 2019 season.

The Patriots hope Drake Maye, the No. 3 pick in the draft, will be their franchise QB. Maye has veteran Jacoby Brissett to help him through his rookie year. Mayo grew up in the Patriot Way, spending his entire eight-year NFL career in New England before joining Belichick's staff as linebackers coach. He might have the toughest time winning right away of all the new coaches.

RAHEEM MORRIS

The Atlanta Falcons chose Morris over Belichick, giving him a second opportunity to run a team. Morris was 17-31 in three seasons with the Buccaneers from 2009-11 and 4-7 as interim coach in Atlanta in 2020.

He takes over a team that made major moves to get in position to contend in

the NFC South. The Falcons gave QB Kirk Cousins \$100 million guaranteed in free agency, drafted QB Michael Penix Jr. with the eighth overall pick and added wide receiver Darrell Mooney.

But the team didn't strengthen a weak defense outside of hiring Morris. They'll need Cousins, Bijan Robinson, Drake London, Kyle Pitts and Mooney to score a lot of points. In a division that hasn't seen a 10-game winner since 2021, the Falcons could take it at 9-8.

ANTONIO PIERCE

A 5-4 finish after replacing Josh McDaniels helped Pierce get the job in Las Vegas after serving in an interim role. Players love him and Pierce brought out the best in many of his guys.

He doesn't have a franchise QB, however. Second-year pro Aidan O'Connell and veteran Gardner Minshew are competing in camp. And 2022 All-Pro running back Josh Jacobs left for Green Bay.

The defense under Pierce stepped up in the second half last season and should be even better. Still, it may not be enough to reach last year's win total of eight.

DAN QUINN

The Washington Commanders ended up with Quinn after a lengthy coaching search. Quinn, who spent the past three seasons as the defensive coordinator in Dallas, was 43-42 as Atlanta's head coach. He would've won a Super Bowl if Brady didn't lead the Patriots back from a 28-3 deficit in 2017.

Quinn got a potential franchise QB in Jayden Daniels with the No. 2 pick in the draft. The Commanders had an impressive off-season, adding running back Austin Ekeler, center Tyler Biadasz, linebacker Bobby Wagner, defensive end Dorance Armstrong and others.

The Commanders should be competitive in a tough NFC East, but are projected to win only six or seven games. □